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DIODORUS AND THE EXPEDITION OF CYRUS

H. D. WESTLAKE

D IODORUS DEVOTES A SUBSTANTIAL and continuous section of his fourteenth book (19–31) to the attempt by Cyrus to wrest the throne of Persia from his brother Artaxerxes and to the sequel after his death in battle at Cunaxa.¹ Scholarly opinion has been sharply divided on the value of this narrative as historical evidence and on its relation to the far longer account by Xenophon in the *Anabasis*. Some scholars have rejected it as almost worthless,² while others have considered it to be preferable on some important issues to the version of Xenophon.³ If the origins of the literary tradition to which it belongs could be firmly established, its value could be more confidently assessed, but unfortunately formidable problems are involved. There is no doubt that its immediate source is the work of Ephorus from which Diodorus has long been very widely believed to have derived almost all his material on Greece and the East throughout a series of books from the eleventh to the fifteenth.⁴ Indeed Ephorus is the only author cited by him on the expedition of Cyrus (22.2; *FGrHist* 70 F 208). On the other hand, the question of the source, or sources, used by Ephorus for his account of this expedition has produced abundant discussion but remains controversial. The works most strongly favoured, frequently in combination with one another, are the *Anabasis* of Xenophon, the *Persica* of Ctesias, and an *Anabasis* attributed by Stephanus of Byzantium to Sophænetus, presumably the mercenary commander from Stymphalus who served under Cyrus.⁵

¹It amounts to 23 pages of Teubner text. References in this paper to Diodorus are to his fourteenth book unless otherwise stated.

²On Cunaxa, J. Kromayer, *Antike Schlachtfelder* 4 (Berlin 1924–31) 239, dismisses it in a single sentence, and O. Lendle, "Der Bericht Xenophons über die Schlacht von Kunaxa," *Gymnasium* 73 (1966) 429–452, at 439, n. 25, in a footnote; J. M. Bigwood, "The Ancient Accounts of the Battle of Cunaxa," *AJP* 104 (1983) 340–357, is also highly critical. I disagree with her verdict on Diodorus (355–356), but in general her paper seems to me to be the most valuable recent treatment of the sources.

³W. W. Tarn, *CAH* 6 (1927) 8; G. L. Cawkwell in *Xenophon, the Persian Expedition*, translated by Rex Warner (ed. 2, Harmondsworth 1972) 17–18, 39–40.

⁴References to the origin and development of this view are collected by F. Jacoby, *FGrHist* 2 C (Berlin 1926) 33.

⁵To cite a single example of basic disagreement, A. von Mess, "Untersuchungen über Ephoros," *RhMus* 61 (1906) 360–407, at 360–390, maintains that Ephorus founded his account principally upon Xenophon, but derived supplementary material from Ctesias, whereas E. Bux, "Sophænetos," *RE* 3A1 (1927) 1008–13, denies that Ephorus used Xenophon at all. J. K. Anderson, *Xenophon* (London 1974) 83, 111–112, makes the novel suggestion that some information could have originated from a work by Phalinos, a Greek military expert in the service of Tissaphernes. There is, however, no evidence that Phalinos, though certainly an educated man, produced an account of his experience.

The aim of this paper is to attempt to establish:

(i) that the tradition represented by the version of Diodorus does not depend on Xenophon as its principal authority, though it does appear to have derived a limited amount of supplementary material from the *Anabasis*;

(ii) that the main source of this tradition was the account by the author of the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*, transmitted through Ephorus to Diodorus, and that this account was probably derived mainly from oral reports rather than from written works. That the Oxyrhynchus historian was the originator of the tradition does not appear to have been maintained in any previous study of the problem.

1

In examining the account of Diodorus and comparing it with that of Xenophon attention will be directed not to divergences on points of detail, which could have arisen through faulty transmission, or on troop numbers, which are notoriously unreliable estimates, but rather to divergences on major issues which influenced, or might have influenced, the course of events. Although Diodorus is here writing a limited section of a general history while Xenophon is writing personal memoirs based on what he himself saw and heard, the difference in genre can be held responsible only to a very small extent for the divergences between the two narratives.

On the opening phase of the expedition the account of Diodorus (19–22) is demonstrably not dependent on that of Xenophon in dealing with two important issues. The first of these is the relationship between the Spartan government and Cyrus. Initially Diodorus mentions only that, in response to an appeal from Cyrus to show gratitude for his support against Athens, the Spartans decided to assist him with ships and an infantry contingent, believing that they would benefit thereby (19.4, cf. 11.2). In a later passage, however, when reporting the arrival of this force at Issus, Diodorus insists on its unofficial character: despite the compliance of the ephors, the Spartans were not prepared to commit themselves to official support of Cyrus until the prospects of his expedition became clearer (21.1–2).⁶ Xenophon gives no hint, either when supplying information about the Spartan reinforcement (*Anab.* 1.4.3) or in the *Hellenica* when referring to the response by the Spartans to the appeal by Cyrus (3.1.1), that they withheld official support for the enterprise.

There is also substantial disagreement between the two versions on a more important question, namely when, where, and to whom was the truth first divulged that the expedition was not directed against rebellious subjects of Persia but against the Great King. At the outset, according to Diodorus,

⁶This point is made also by Justin, 5.11.6–7, doubtless following the same tradition.

Cyrus concealed his real objective from his troops, pretending that he had recruited them to suppress revolts in Cilicia and Pisidia (19.3.6). He then told his officers the truth but not the rank and file, fearing that the magnitude of the project would cause desertions (19.9). When the mutiny at Tarsus threatened his prospects, he maintained his earlier pretence (20.4–5).⁷ Only after reaching Thapsacus on the Euphrates did he call an assembly and reveal his real aim, disarming the shocked reaction of the soldiers by means of lavish gifts and promises (21.6). On the other hand, Xenophon, in a passage explaining how he himself came to join the expedition at Sardis, asserts that only Clearchus then knew that it was to be against Artaxerxes; not even Proxenus, one of the generals and a friend of Xenophon, was aware of its real objective (3.1.10). Cyrus told Proxenus that he needed mercenaries for service against the Pisidians but told Sophanes and Socrates that he planned operations against Tissaphernes (1.1.11). When the mutiny at Tarsus, which is described in detail, eventually ended, the soldiers suspected that they were being led against the King but did not openly voice their suspicions (1.3.1–21). At Thapsacus Cyrus assembled his generals and, apparently for the first time, told them the truth; the troops were to be informed and their consent to continue in his service was to be sought (1.4.11–13). On this issue the much shorter version of Diodorus seems to be more consistent and convincing than that of Xenophon.

In the opening section of his narrative Diodorus includes two other passages containing important and apparently authentic information not found in the *Anabasis*. They are, however, less relevant to the present investigation because they may well be based on reports emanating originally not from the camp of Cyrus but from the Persian side. The first passage deals with the equivocal role played by Syennesis, the local dynast of Cilicia. Conscious that he was no match for Cyrus, he agreed to support the expedition and contributed to it a Cilician contingent under one of his sons. At the same time, he shrewdly hedged his bets by sending his other son to assure Artaxerxes of his loyalty and to declare that he would seize any opportunity to desert Cyrus (20.1–3).⁸ Xenophon records in great detail the progress of the army into and through Cilicia (1.2.12–27; 4.4–5) but does not appear to have been aware of the subterfuge practised by its ruler.⁹ In the second

⁷Here Diodorus refers to two sources of anxiety felt by the troops which Xenophon does not expressly mention: the immense distance to the heart of the Persian empire and the reputed strength of the Persian army. In other respects the two accounts of the mutiny seem to be more or less parallel.

⁸Ctesias mentioned that Syennesis allied with both sides (*FGrHist* 688 F 16.63), as Bigwood (above, n. 2) 349–350, points out. This statement does not necessarily mean that this passage in Diodorus is derived ultimately from Ctesias: both could be reporting the truth independently.

⁹His inclusion of the rumour that relations between Cyrus and the Cilician queen were sexual as well as diplomatic illustrates his tendency to enliven his narrative with gossip picked up in the equivalent of the officers' mess.

passage Diodorus reviews the preparations by Artaxerxes to counter the challenge of his brother. Ephorus is cited for the size of his army, and knowledge is claimed of his feelings as well as of his actions (22.1–4). Xenophon, on the other hand, can report on these preparations only what Cyrus learned from deserters (1.7.2), which seems to have been faulty both on the size of the enemy army (1.7.11–13) and on its movements, since its approach took him by surprise (1.8.1).

On the battle of Cunaxa Diodorus (23–24) and Xenophon (1.8.8–24; 10.1–15) provide differing accounts, both considered by modern scholars to be thoroughly unsatisfactory.

There is a substantial difference between the two authorities on the initial advance of the Greek mercenaries against the enemy. Diodorus states that, on orders from Clearchus, they conserved their energy at first by moving forward slowly but broke into a run when within range of enemy missiles (23.1).¹⁰ Xenophon, without referring to the issue of orders, describes what appear to have been similar movements which he evidently saw in progress and assumed to have developed naturally because the front ranks of the phalanx outpaced the rear ranks (1.8.18). Another difference is that, on both occasions when the Greek mercenaries confronted oriental troops, Diodorus asserts that the latter fled after resisting briefly (23.3–4; 24.3), Xenophon that they fled even before arrows could reach them (1.8.19; 10.11).¹¹ On the outcome of the conflict between Cyrus and Artaxerxes there is again an important difference between the two accounts. According to Diodorus a javelin thrown by Cyrus struck his brother, who was unhorsed and was removed wounded from the battlefield, and then Cyrus was fatally wounded by a Persian soldier (23.6–7).¹² Xenophon, who quotes Ctesias because neither he nor anyone serving in the Greek mercenary force can have witnessed what happened here, records the wounding of Artaxerxes and the slaying of Cyrus in terms similar to those used by Diodorus (1.8.26–27),¹³ but according to his version the King was not incapacitated by his wound and played an active part in the battle until it ended (1.10.1–15).

A far more glaring discrepancy between the two versions is to be observed in the role assigned by each to Tissaphernes. In this case, however, the discrepancy should not be attributed to a conflict of traditions but to the addition of Diodorus to conventionally rhetorical battle scenes. In his ac-

¹⁰Polyaenus (2.2.3) gives a similar account, evidently derived from Ephorus.

¹¹Bigwood (above, n. 2) 352–353, may be right in attributing the presentation by Diodorus on this point to his notorious penchant for conventional rhetoric (see below), but the discrepancy with the account of Xenophon could have arisen because the two versions are based on reports by eyewitnesses observing the battle from different vantage points.

¹²Justin, 5.11.8–9, again follows the same tradition (see above, n. 6).

¹³Xenophon evidently did not accept all the details given by Ctesias on the death of Cyrus (*FGrHist* 688 F 20), which Plutarch, *Artax.* 11.10, found excessive and irksome.

count Tissaphernes is credited with heroic exploits: when Artaxerxes was wounded, he assumed command of the royal troops, restored their morale, and with his own hand slew large numbers of the enemy (23.6). Diodorus likes to depict leaders of fifth- and fourth-century armies as though they were Homeric heroes fighting Homeric battles, and ingredients commonly found in his battle narratives occur in his account of Cunaxa.¹⁴ Tissaphernes was much respected and feared by the Greeks of his day, but, to judge from the evidence on other stages of his career, rather as a diplomat and intriguer than as a dashing soldier. Xenophon attributes to him a different role in the battle, which, though less spectacular, was of considerable value to the cause of the King: he certainly outshone other army commanders whose troops fled as soon as the fighting began.¹⁵ In the circumstances he deservedly received especially high honours from Artaxerxes, though Diodorus may have been led by the influence of his own rhetoric to exaggerate them somewhat (26.4). It is, however, likely that the King felt more gratitude towards him for his timely warning of the preparations being made by Cyrus (Xen. 1.2.4–5) than for his service on the battlefield.

On the aftermath of the battle (Diod. 24.7–27.3) there are further differences between the two authorities. They create much the same impression in their accounts of the exchanges between the Greek generals and Phalinus, the leader of the mission from the King to demand that the Greeks should surrender their arms (Diod. 25.1–7; Xen. 2.1.7–23). This impression is doubtless authentic, but there are disagreements on the identity of the generals who replied defiantly to the demand of the King and on the content of their replies. A probable explanation is that the two versions originate from reports by different informants on the Greek side who attended the meeting.¹⁶

Attention may be drawn at this point to a disagreement between the two authorities on the status of Clearchus. Diodorus initially credits him with command of all the Peloponnesian troops except the Achaeans (19.8), which is shown by the detailed account of Xenophon (1.2.1–3) to be inaccurate. Later Diodorus makes no specific reference to his status but assumes that he occupied a position of authority whereby the entire Greek mercenary force, including the other generals, was under his personal control both at Cunaxa

¹⁴Bigwood (above, n. 2) 352–354. Diodorus must himself be responsible for the stereotyped rhetorical phrases and cannot have derived them from Ephorus: the commonest of them, λαμπρῶς ἡγωνίζετο (23.6; often the participle is used) occurs in many passages where Diodorus cannot have been dependent on Ephorus, cf. 17.60.6, 63.4; 18.15.3; 19.4.6, 33.1; 20.23.6, 38.6, 52.1.

¹⁵It will suffice to refer to 1.7.12, 8.9, 10.5–8, cf. 2.3.19, where Tissaphernes is said to have included in a speech some references (not wholly disinterested) to his own achievements.

¹⁶As is shrewdly suggested by J. Roy, "Xenophon's Evidence for the *Anabasis*," *Athenaeum* ns 46 (1968) 37–46, at 44, n. 28.

and during the ensuing negotiations (22.5–26.7).¹⁷ Xenophon, on the other hand, recording the developments after the battle, makes the significant comment that henceforward the generals and captains obeyed Clearchus not because they had elected him but because, conscious of their own inexperience, they appreciated that he alone was adequately qualified for the responsibilities of leadership (2.2.6). This reference to his lack of official status is doubtless accurate, but here and elsewhere Xenophon adopts a somewhat more grudging attitude towards him. His military competence and his diplomatic skill, especially during the mutiny at Tarsus, are acknowledged, and he is much preferred to Menon, whom they both hated, but great emphasis is laid on his harshness, surliness, and inability to inspire good will (cf. 2.6.9–13). Furthermore, Xenophon appears to suggest that at an early stage at Cunaxa Clearchus, by ignoring an order from Cyrus to engage the enemy centre, threw away an excellent opportunity to gain a decisive victory (1.8.12–13).¹⁸ Xenophon also chooses to picture himself at a later stage as an exceptionally approachable leader of an almost democratic army, so that his attitude towards the tough old disciplinarian Clearchus, exercising unauthorised power, is, as might have been expected, somewhat unsympathetic. Nevertheless, from at least as early as the mutiny at Tarsus Clearchus stood out above the other generals and continued until his death to be the *de facto* commander in chief of the Greek mercenaries.

There is also disagreement between the two versions on the status of Cheirosophus, who initially joined the expedition at Issus as commander of the mercenary force sent by the Spartans (Diod. 21.1). The two authorities agree that he was later appointed supreme commander of the Greek army, but they disagree on the stage at which this appointment was made and on the length of his tenure. According to Diodorus he was appointed immediately after the treacherous arrest of Clearchus and the other generals (27.1). Xenophon does not refer to any change in his status at this point, although he was entrusted with the important responsibility of commanding the vanguard when the army was on the march (3.2.37). It was only much later, in consequence of bickering among the troops when their ordeal was almost over, that he was elected supreme commander (6.1.32), and his tenure of the appointment ended after a few days (6.2.12).

In this section the narrative of Diodorus again contains some information probably derived from sources on the Persian side. Artaxerxes, recovering

¹⁷It is possible that Diodorus is here influenced by the flattering treatment of Clearchus by Ctesias (T 7b = *Artax.* 13.7).

¹⁸Whether or not Clearchus could have carried out this order is not clear because the relative positions of the two armies are not precisely defined, but Xenophon apparently believed that he could, cf. Anderson (above, n. 5) 104. Plutarch or some predecessor, relying, it seems, on the account of Xenophon, roundly condemns the overcaution of Clearchus, charging him with ruining the cause of Cyrus by failing to obey the order (*Artax.* 8.3–8).

from his wound, mistakenly imagines that the Greeks are in flight and pursues them (26.1). The terms of the truce subsequently negotiated with him are specifically defined (26.3), and reference is made to his conferment of rewards at Babylon on persons who had distinguished themselves in the battle (26.4). Tissaphernes takes the initiative in proposing plans for the annihilation of the Greeks, which are accepted with enthusiasm by the King (26.5). Some of this information may be thought to be implicit in the far longer account of Xenophon, but he can only deduce the feelings of Artaxerxes from his actions (2.2.18; 3.1). Finally, according to Diodorus (27.2) Menon, alone of the generals seized by Tissaphernes, was spared by the King because he was believed to be about to betray the Greeks. Xenophon, on the other hand, refers to a report, which he does not explain, that, whereas the other generals were beheaded, Menon died a lingering death after being tortured for a year (2.6.29).

In the final section of continuous narrative by Diodorus on the expedition, which begins at the point where Tissaphernes abandons his attempt to destroy the Greeks (27.4–31), the difference in scale between the two versions becomes even greater than before. Whereas Diodorus is content with a factual summary with a few highlights, Xenophon provides a very lengthy account of events in most of which he assigns to himself the role of protagonist (3.5–6.6).¹⁹ Information on this stage of the expedition must have originated from Greeks who themselves took part in it: none can have been derived from barbarian enemies such as the Carduchi, and the Greeks living in areas through which the army passed are most unlikely to have made any contribution. To the soldiers who experienced the hardships of the march its most memorable features must have been much the same. Accordingly, any summary account might appear to be a résumé of any detailed version. There is in fact one cogent reason for rejecting the view that the account of Diodorus is here derived ultimately from the *Anabasis*: it does not once refer to Xenophon, who is so constantly in the foreground of his own version, and of the Greek leaders only Cheirosophus is named (30.4–5; 31.3). The two versions differ on a considerable number of facts and figures,²⁰ but these are not perhaps of any great significance.

The divergences between the two accounts of the expedition to which attention has been drawn may be thought to be sufficiently striking and sufficiently numerous to disprove any idea that the *Anabasis* of Xenophon is the main source upon which the tradition represented by the version of Diodorus is based. There are indications that at some stage in the development of this tradition a certain amount of information from the *Anabasis*

¹⁹The end of the continuous narrative in Diodorus (31.5) corresponds to the end of *Anabasis* 6. Diod. 37.1–4, where Xenophon is stated for the first time to have been appointed general, deals in a few sentences with the series of events recorded in *Anabasis* 7.

²⁰Bux (above, n. 5) 1012–1013, gives a list.

was introduced into it.²¹ This information, which seems to have been confined largely to detail, can hardly have had much influence on the presentation of major issues, where, as maintained above, the differences are fundamental.

II

With the increase in the number of papyrus fragments recovered from the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*,²² it has become more and more firmly established that passages in the thirteenth and fourteenth books of Diodorus are, indirectly through Ephorus, derived from that work.²³ In many instances the *Hellenica* of Xenophon, which is certainly independent of the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*, provides a substantially different account of the same episode. Thus Ephorus appears to have relied mainly on the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* for material on Greece and the East from as early as 410 until at least as late as 395. Within this period falls the expedition of Cyrus against his brother and the return of the Greeks who served under him (401–399). If the Oxyrhynchus historian could be shown to have confined his attention to Greek history in the narrowest sense, concentrating upon the fortunes of Greek cities and their conflicts and alliances with one another, Ephorus might have been thought to have had some justification for turning temporarily to other sources for material on the expedition of Cyrus. There is, however, abundant evidence in the London papyrus that its author was profoundly interested in the Persians and remarkably well informed about them. He provides detailed reports on two offensives conducted by Agesilaus against Persian forces in Asia Minor (11–12, 21–22)²⁴ and on military and diplomatic activities by Conon when in command of a Persian fleet (9, 15, 19–20). He mentions the normal practice of Persian kings in neglecting to maintain

²¹The similarities and verbal correspondences claimed by von Mess (above, n. 5) 360–390, do not seem to me to be as significant as he believes. He quotes as a striking example of verbal correspondence Diod. 26.6–7, 27.1 with Xen. 2.5.30–34 (367), but two Greek authors wishing to record briefly and simply this sequence of events might surely have expressed themselves in very similar terms. Scholars long accustomed to the old-fashioned practice of trying to render passages of English into classical Greek would, I think, support that conclusion.

²²The Florentine and London papyri are edited together by V. Bartoletti, *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (Leipzig 1959), whose system of numbering the sections is adopted here. A more recent discovery is edited by L. Koenen, "Papyrology in the Federal Republic of Germany and Fieldwork of the International Photographic Archive in Cairo," *Studia Papyrologica* 15 (1976) 39–79, at 69–79.

²³This conclusion has been very widely accepted, cf. I. A. F. Bruce, *Historical Commentary on the Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (Cambridge 1967) 20–21; H. R. Breitenbach, "Hellenica Oxyrhynchia," *RE Supp.* 12 (1970) 413.

²⁴He is knowledgeable about the topography of Asia Minor, cf. G. L. Barber, *Ephorus* (Cambridge 1935) 54.

payments for troops on active service and thereby creating difficulties for their commanders (19.2). Even more significant is a long passage, which happens to be badly mutilated, on the elaborate measures adopted by Artaxerxes in 395 to secure the execution of Tissaphernes (13):²⁵ in this episode the principal characters were Persian, and no Greeks were directly involved. Accordingly, although unfortunately no papyrus fragment of the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* has been recovered dealing with the expedition of Cyrus, the author can hardly have omitted it and is indeed likely to have recorded it on a considerable scale. There seems to be no valid reason why Ephorus should have chosen in this instance to desert the authority upon which he was largely dependent for the periods both before and after the expedition and to seek evidence elsewhere. Accordingly the tradition to which the account of Diodorus belongs may with some confidence be traced one stage further back beyond Ephorus to the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*.

Unfortunately the same confidence cannot be felt in attempting to determine the sources used by the Oxyrhynchus historian, and such clues as may be noted are mostly negative. It was mentioned above that the works most strongly favoured by scholars as sources for Ephorus in his account of the expedition were the *Anabasis* of Xenophon, the *Persica* of Ctesias, and the *Anabasis* of Sophaeetus.²⁶ Could any of these have been the main source on which the Oxyrhynchus historian depended? The first may be eliminated if the conclusions reached in the first section of this paper have any validity. Another factor is that, if Xenophon produced his *Anabasis* as late as the 360s, as some scholars maintain,²⁷ it can hardly have been already in circulation when the Oxyrhynchus historian was writing.

There is, on the other hand, little doubt that he could have consulted the *Persica* of Ctesias if he had so wished. That work is known from the epitome by Photius and from the *Artaxerxes* of Plutarch, which is largely dependent on it, to have contained a long account of the conflict for the throne of Persia based on information gathered by its author when serving as a physician of the Persian court. Ctesias claims to have had conversations with Clearchus while the latter was in captivity after being arrested by Tissaphernes.²⁸ The *Persica* might be the origin of some passages in Diodorus which, as noted above, may be thought to have been derived from the Persian side. Indeed on some points Ctesias and Diodorus agree, though agreement does not

²⁵Diodorus (80.6–8) and Polyaeus (7.16.1) give accounts of this episode, both depending on Ephorus. It may be noted here that Ctesias cannot have recorded it in his *Persica* because that work ended in 398/7 (Diod. 46.6).

²⁶See the introductory paragraph above, 000.

²⁷Cawkwell (above, n. 3) 16; W. E. Higgins, *Xenophon the Athenian* (New York 1977) 98.

²⁸*FGrHist* 688 F 27.69; *Artax.* 18.1–4. Hereafter fragments and testimonia of Ctesias will be designated merely by F and T.

necessarily mean more than that both are telling the truth.²⁹ There are, however, instances of discrepancy between Ctesias and Diodorus. The former falsely asserts that Sparta officially ordered Clearchus to give assistance to Cyrus (Plut. 6.5; F 16.63), whereas Diodorus provides a different and demonstrably more accurate picture of the relations between the Spartans and Cyrus (21.1–2). Ctesias gives a highly complex account of the circumstances leading to the death of Cyrus (Plut. 11.1–10),³⁰ whereas Diodorus states briefly that he was mortally wounded by an undistinguished Persian (23.6–7). According to Ctesias Ariaeus fought beside Cyrus in the conflict between the bodyguards of the two brothers at Cunaxa (Plut. 11.1), whereas Diodorus is undoubtedly more accurate in assigning Ariaeus the command of the left wing, which was in action some distance away (24.1; 22.5). Ctesias maintains that Artaxerxes was present when the body of Cyrus was mutilated after nightfall (Plut. 13.1–2), whereas Diodorus certainly implies that the King received a wound serious enough to incapacitate him for some days (23.6; 26.1). There is, however, one reason far more convincing than these discrepancies between short passages for rejecting any suggestion that the Oxyrhynchus historian might have used the *Persica* as a main source on the expedition of Cyrus. From the Photian epitome and from the *Artaxerxes* of Plutarch it is abundantly clear that the *Persica* was essentially a court chronicle packed with personal feuds, intrigues, scandals, and sensationalism, and it gained for its author an unenviable reputation in antiquity for fabrication and misrepresentation (T 11). Ctesias seems to have been interested in the conflict between Artaxerxes and Cyrus not so much for its influence upon Persian history as for its repercussions at the Persian court where it gave rise to vindictive plots and inhuman punishments (F 16.66; F 27.69–70; *Artax.* 14–17). There can have been few historians whose methods and principles contrasted more violently with one another than Ctesias and the sober and pedestrian but meticulously accurate and objective Oxyrhynchus historian, although they were almost contemporaries. The latter may well have consulted the *Persica* and possibly derived some information from it, but he must surely have regarded it with scepticism and distaste. It is inconceivable that he can have used it as his principal source.³¹ Ephorus, on

²⁹On the policy adopted by Syennesis see above, n. 8, and on the possibility of a link between the prominence of Clearchus in Diodorus and the reputed prejudice of Ctesias in his favour see above, n. 17. Plut. 6.6 and Diod. 19.7 agree that the Greek mercenaries at the outset numbered 13,000. Diod. 14.22.3, quoting Ephorus F 208, gives the same total (400,000) as Ctesias F 22 for the army of Artaxerxes at Cunaxa, whereas Xen. 1.7.11 gives a much higher figure.

³⁰Plutarch found this long-winded recital thoroughly tedious (11.10, cf. above, n. 13), but to Ctesias it was a necessary prelude to the catalogue of barbarous punishments meted out to persons claiming to have contributed to the death of Cyrus (*Artax.* 14–17).

³¹Its value to him must have been limited for another reason: it did not cover the return of the Greek mercenaries from central Asia, and despite the contacts between Ctesias and Clearchus

the other hand, who was evidently well-read, must have been familiar with the work of Ctesias and very probably derived some material on the expedition of Cyrus from it, especially on the Persian side (cf. note 29). Nevertheless, from what is known about the content and distinctive features of the *Persica* it cannot have provided a satisfactory basis for an account of the expedition recorded from the Greek point of view as is given by Diodorus.

The *Anabasis* of Sophaenetos is an enigma. It is mentioned only by Stephanus of Byzantium, who wrote in the fifth century A.D. and cites it for four geographical names in Asia, all on the route followed by the Greeks before and after the battle of Cunaxa (*FGrHist* 109). The author is presumed to have been Sophaenetos of Stymphalus, who was the oldest of the Greek generals (Xen. 6.5–13). If this Sophaenetos wrote an account of the expedition, it was probably produced not very long after his return to Greece and thus preceded the *Anabasis* of Xenophon, who may be thought to have been prompted to write another version because he felt that his own achievements had received insufficient appreciation in that of Sophaenetos. If this reconstruction were accepted, the work of Sophaenetos would almost certainly have been accessible to the Oxyrhynchus historian and might well be the source from which passages in Diodorus containing information conflicting with, or additional to, information in Xenophon were ultimately derived. Arcadian Stymphalus was not a promising background for an aspiring author, but it apparently produced Aeneas Tacticus, part of whose work on a military theme written in the fourth century B.C. has been preserved, though it is not conspicuous for its literary qualities. A work by Sophaenetos could well have been overlooked when it had to compete with a rival work on the same subject by a well-educated Athenian who had been associated with Socrates and was endowed with a flair for writing attractively lively narrative. A copy of this long-forgotten work could have been recovered from obscurity centuries later by the infinitely painstaking Stephanus of Byzantium. If this hypothesis could be substantiated, it would establish the existence of a literary tradition originating from Sophaenetos and traceable through the Oxyrhynchus historian and Ephorus to Diodorus. Unfortunately it rests upon very flimsy foundations. Scholars have pointed out the difficulty of explaining how information found in the version of Diodorus can have been known to Sophaenetos but not to Xenophon when both joined the expedition at the outset and were later colleagues.³² There is, however, a more serious objection: if Sophaenetos published an *Anabasis* at the beginning of the fourth century, why is there no mention of it for many centuries, even by Plutarch, who is increasingly acknowledged to have been

after the arrest of the latter, there is no evidence that it dealt in any detail with the experiences of Cyrus and his army during the march from Sardis to Cunaxa.

³²Cf. Anderson (above, n. 5) 110–111.

a most diligent researcher and was evidently meticulous in examining the sources available to him on the battle of Cunaxa?³³ Admittedly the *Anabasis* of Sophænetus could, as suggested above, have become unfashionable, and it is not without precedent for a work to have remained unmentioned in the extant remnants of ancient literature, including fragments, for a considerable period,³⁴ though in this case the period is exceptionally lengthy. On the other hand, it is much more remarkable that, if there had existed in the fourth century another *Anabasis* with which the well-known *Anabasis* of Xenophon was in competition, no reference should have been made for centuries to the fact that the expedition of Cyrus was the subject of two works with the same title. Where authors gave accounts which, expressly or by implication, were conflicting, the resulting controversies tended to evoke a lively interest from their successors many years later. For example, Plutarch frequently draws attention to discrepancies between his sources, as may be seen not only in the *Artaxerxes*, cited above, but also in other Lives.³⁵

Attempts to explain the puzzling reference by Stephanus to an *Anabasis* by Sophænetus have not succeeded in establishing it as a contemporary work by a member of the expedition which influenced the tradition represented by Diodorus. A more convincing explanation may be that centuries later some aspiring writer seeking a theme on which he could display his talents and perhaps believing the *Anabasis* of Xenophon to be vitiated by its prejudice in favour of its author, wrote an alternative version pretending that it was the work of the Stymphalian mercenary commander.³⁶ Such forgeries, which included the notorious Letters of Phalaris, were by no means uncommon in antiquity.

There may well have been a number of literary works, some of them by totally unknown authors, from which the Oxyrhynchus historian could have derived material on the expedition of Cyrus if he had so wished.³⁷ It is, however, improbable that for any part of his work he chose to rely principally, or indeed to any great extent, upon written sources. Close study of

³³Anderson (above, n. 5) 81–82; Bigwood (above, n. 2) 343.

³⁴H. Bloch, *Athenian Studies Presented to William Scott Ferguson*, HCSP Supp. 1 (1940) 340, draws attention to the neglect of the work by Ptolemy on Alexander until Arrian made it his main source, cf. A. B. Bosworth, *Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander* 1 (Oxford 1980) 22.

³⁵Cf. *Aristeides* 1.2–9; *Them.* 27.1; *Alcib.* 32.3.

³⁶Jacoby, *FGrHist* 2 D (Berlin 1930) 349–350, maintains that E. Schwartz was perhaps right in doubting the authenticity of the *Anabasis* attributed to Sophænetus but that its spuriousness cannot be proved, as is indeed true.

³⁷Breitenbach (above, n. 22) 406–407, names several authors whose work he might have found useful, though not necessarily on the expedition of Cyrus. In 7.2, where he uses the phrase *καίτοι τινές λέγουσιν*, it is not clear whether he is referring to written or to oral information.

the papyrus fragments has created for most readers a very strong impression, though it can be no more than an impression, that he adopted the method practised by Thucydides, whose *History* he continued, of building up his narrative from reports obtained orally from eyewitnesses.³⁸ Like Thucydides, he wrote contemporary history, and he certainly could, if he were sufficiently painstaking, have collected material, even on events of the earliest years covered by his work, from informants, though, again like Thucydides (1.22.2–3), he was doubtless aware that their reports might be untrustworthy. On the expedition of Cyrus he must have had plenty of opportunities to question survivors, either in Greece or in Asia Minor, and it is at least arguable that almost all his account was derived from what he learned from them.

Finally, some light may be thrown upon the origin of the tradition on the expedition of Cyrus represented in the account of Diodorus by drawing attention to distinctive features in its presentation of the subject matter.³⁹ It provides a clear and objective but somewhat monotonous record of events; it does not draw general conclusions and includes little comment on the situations described; it does not assess, explicitly or implicitly, the qualities of leading personalities⁴⁰ and makes no claims to knowledge of their motives and feelings.⁴¹ Much the same features are prominent throughout the narrative of Diodorus (13.43–14.110) on Greece and the East during the entire period probably covered by the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*. It is less graphic and less biased than his account of Sicily and the West during the same period. Judgements on moral or other issues are few, and there is no marked prejudice for or against cities or political factions.⁴² The actions of celebrated leaders, notably Alcibiades and Lysander, are recorded at some length, but, while some passages convey approval or disapproval, no attempt is made to produce a definitive evaluation of them.⁴³ Accordingly, the section of the fourteenth book on the expedition of Cyrus (19–31) is in harmony with the pattern of the preceding and succeeding narrative, so that there seems to be

³⁸Bruce (above, n. 22) 6–8, and Breitenbach (above, n. 22) 406, are in my opinion abundantly justified in reaching this conclusion.

³⁹The conventional rhetoric on the battle of Cunaxa, for which Diodorus himself is certainly responsible (see above, 244–245), will be excluded.

⁴⁰Even that of Cyrus: only his ambition and love of war (19.2) and his rashness at Cunaxa (23.7) are mentioned.

⁴¹The following passages might be considered to be exceptions: 20.2 (Syennesis); 26.1 (Artaxerxes); 27.3 (Tissaphernes).

⁴²The extreme democrats at Athens are unsympathetically presented in the account of the peace negotiations after the battle of Cyzicus (13.53.1–3, cf. *Hell. Ox.* 7.2 for a similar attitude towards their successors some years later). The Thirty at Athens receive no less adverse treatment from Diodorus than from other writers (14.3–6; 32–33).

⁴³The most sympathetically treated among the leading figures is Conon. It is significant that he is favourably presented by the Oxyrhynchus historian also.

no reason to doubt that it belongs to the same tradition. A remarkable contrast may be noted between the fourteenth and fifteenth books in the forceful expression of positive opinions. The latter book, in which Ephorus remains the immediate authority, whereas the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* could probably no longer be used by Ephorus,⁴⁴ contains at the beginning a long and bitter condemnation of Spartan imperialism (1–22) and later somewhat extravagant eulogies of prominent figures, including Timotheus (36.5), Iphicrates (44), and Pelopidas (81).

The distinctive features of the thirteenth and fourteenth books noted above, including the substantial passage in the latter on the expedition of Cyrus, are very similar to those of the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*, to which scholars have drawn attention.⁴⁵ That work is accurate and largely unprejudiced but monotonous and dispassionate; it contains a minimum of comment and little expression of approval.⁴⁶ The similarity between the Oxyrhynchus historian and Diodorus, in the above mentioned books, is the more remarkable because a direct link between them can almost certainly be excluded. Although arguments based on such criteria tend to be subjective, recognition of this affinity lends additional support to the belief that the narrative of Diodorus on the expedition of Cyrus is largely dependent, indirectly through Ephorus, on the account of the episode by the Oxyrhynchus historian. Accordingly the narrative of Diodorus is of considerable value and should not be dismissed lightly.

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⁴⁴If, as seems likely, the work ended with the Peace of Antalcidas.

⁴⁵Cf. Bruce (above, n. 22) 9, 17–18; Breitenbach (above, n. 22) 408, 411, 423.

⁴⁶An unidentifiable person in 14.2 is highly praised, but, although the campaigns of Agesilaus in Asia are fully reported (11–12; 21–22), his leadership is not explicitly approved.